

MEDIA RELEASE



**Attention: News Director
For Immediate Release
October 18, 2006**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
DAVID L. HUBER
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
Western District of Kentucky**

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PROJECT BACKFIRE NETS A LOUISVILLE METHAMPHETAMINE COOK

-- Sawed off shot gun and seven handguns found

David L. Huber, United States Attorney for the Western District of Kentucky, announced today that **DONALD BELCHER**, age 42, of 6303 Powder Horn Drive, Louisville, Kentucky, **plead guilty** to conspiring to manufacture 50 grams or more of methamphetamine between June 17, 2005, and February 21, 2006, attempting to manufacture 50 grams or more of methamphetamine, and possessing 5 grams or more of methamphetamine with the intent to sell it. **Belcher** also **plead guilty** to possessing multiple firearms, including a sawed off shotgun, in furtherance of his drug crimes.

Belcher faces a maximum penalty of life in prison, a maximum fine of \$10,500,000, and a period of supervised release of up to Life. **Belcher** faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years in prison and a mandatory minimum period of supervised release of 5 years. **There is no parole in the federal judicial system.**

Between June 17, 2005 and February 21, 2006, **Belcher** conspired with others to obtain pseudoephedrine from various pharmacies in and around the Louisville area to manufacture methamphetamine. **Belcher**, assisted by others, obtained over 300 grams of pseudoephedrine for

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use in manufacturing methamphetamine during this time frame. On February 21, 2006, Louisville Metro Police executed a search warrant at **Belcher's** residence located at 6303 Powder Horn Drive, Louisville, Kentucky, and found a methamphetamine laboratory in his basement. **Belcher** had all the necessary ingredients to manufacture methamphetamine in his residence and was in the process of manufacturing methamphetamine with the intention of distributing in and around Louisville. Police located approximately 2 quarts of methamphetamine oil in the last stages of the manufacturing process. This would have produced over 50 grams of methamphetamine. Additionally, police seized over 5 grams of methamphetamine from **Belcher's** person and residence. Police also seized **Belcher's** loaded Remington short barrel shotgun. **Belcher** had his short barrel shotgun stuffed in his basement couch in close proximity to his methamphetamine laboratory in order to protect his laboratory. Police found numerous other firearms in the house including a Colt, .38 caliber revolver, a Ruger, .22 caliber firearm, a Bryco Arms, .38 caliber firearm, a Lorcin, .380 caliber firearm, and three Smith and Wesson, 9mm firearms. **Belcher** admitted that he possessed all of these firearms in furtherance of his drug trafficking and drug manufacturing activities.

Belcher will be sentenced in United States District Court in Louisville, Kentucky by United States District Judge Thomas Russell on January 17, 2006 at 12:00 p.m.

This is a Project Backfire prosecution. Project Backfire is a cooperative effort by the Jefferson County Attorney's Office, the Jefferson County Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, the Louisville Metro Police Department, and the United States Attorney's Office to ensure that firearm offenses are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the state and federal law.

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The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Brian Butler, and it was investigated by the Louisville Metro Police Department (Third Division Flex Platoon and Metro Narcotics) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

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